



Recruitment and Retention of Teachers in Missouri Public Schools

A Report to the Missouri General Assembly

December 2025

2025 UPDATE
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS IN MISSOURI PUBLIC SCHOOLS
A REPORT TO THE MISSOURI GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Introduction

James Coleman, a Johns Hopkins’s sociologist, issued the Equality of Educational Opportunity report nearly 60 years ago before educational research was common. It contained two key findings related to teacher quality:

- The “quality of teachers shows a stronger relationship than school facilities and curricula to pupil achievement.”
- The “effect of good teachers is greatest upon the children who suffer educational disadvantages most.”

Numerous researchers since then have come to the same conclusion: Teacher quality is the most important school-related variable. The creation of this annual report on Missouri’s teacher workforce acknowledges the critical role teachers have in student success.

Missouri statute ([161.098 RSMo](#)) directs the State Board of Education to “report to the general assembly on the retention and recruitment of teachers in the state’s schools” beginning on December 15, 1999 and annually by that date in each of the following years. The 2025 Recruitment and Retention Report is in response to this statutory directive.

This report is based upon data from several key sources, including:

- teacher preparation program enrollment and certification data;¹
- teacher demographic data;
- teacher certification;
- age and experience of teachers;
- teacher recruitment and teacher retention data; and
- average teacher salary data.

Summary of key teacher workforce demographic data for 2024-25

Race/Ethnicity

- The percentage of Missouri teachers who are non-white increased from 6.9 percent in 2019-20 to 9.5 percent in 2024-25, reflecting a 2.6% increase.

Experience

- Teachers with 10 or fewer years of experience decreased from 47.1 to 47.0 percent of all teachers.
- Teachers with five or fewer years of experience increased from 27.7 to 27.9 percent of all teachers.

Teacher Workforce Dynamics

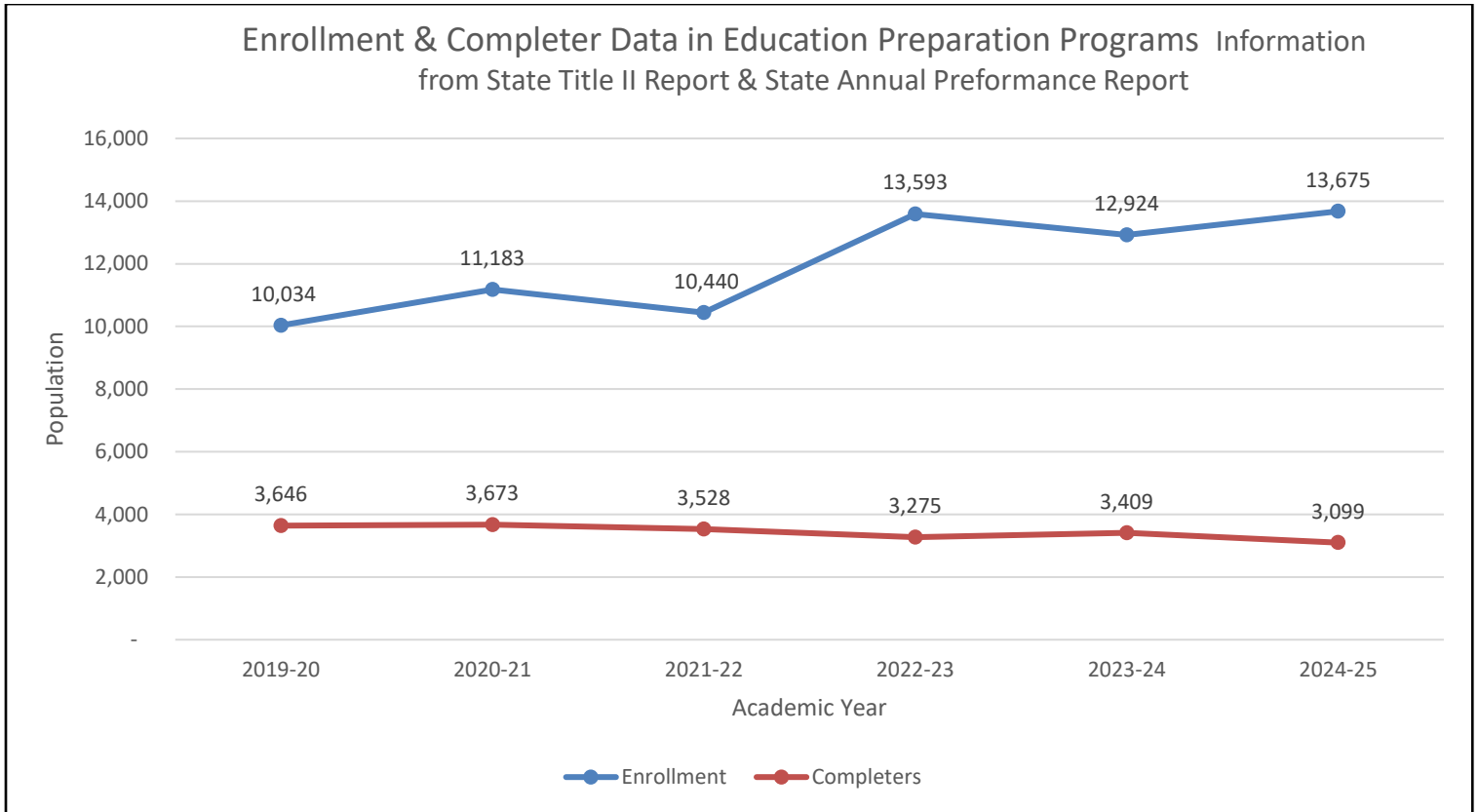
- The percentage of district new hires who are first-year Missouri teachers increased from 51.0 percent in 2023-24 to 51.6 percent in 2024-25.

Teacher Retention

- The in-profession retention of all teachers improved by 0.8% from 2023-24 to 2024-25.
- The in-profession retention rate of teachers with five years or less experience improved by 1.3% over the past two years.

¹ In an effort to increase the accuracy of data on the number of students enrolled in teacher preparation programs, DESE began collecting this data in the fall of 2023. Previously, data from Title II reporting was used for this purpose. Because this new process includes all current enrollees, instead of the more limited number required by Title II, the change resulted in stark increase in the number of enrolled candidates.

Enrollment & Completers in EPPs from 2019-20 to 2024-25

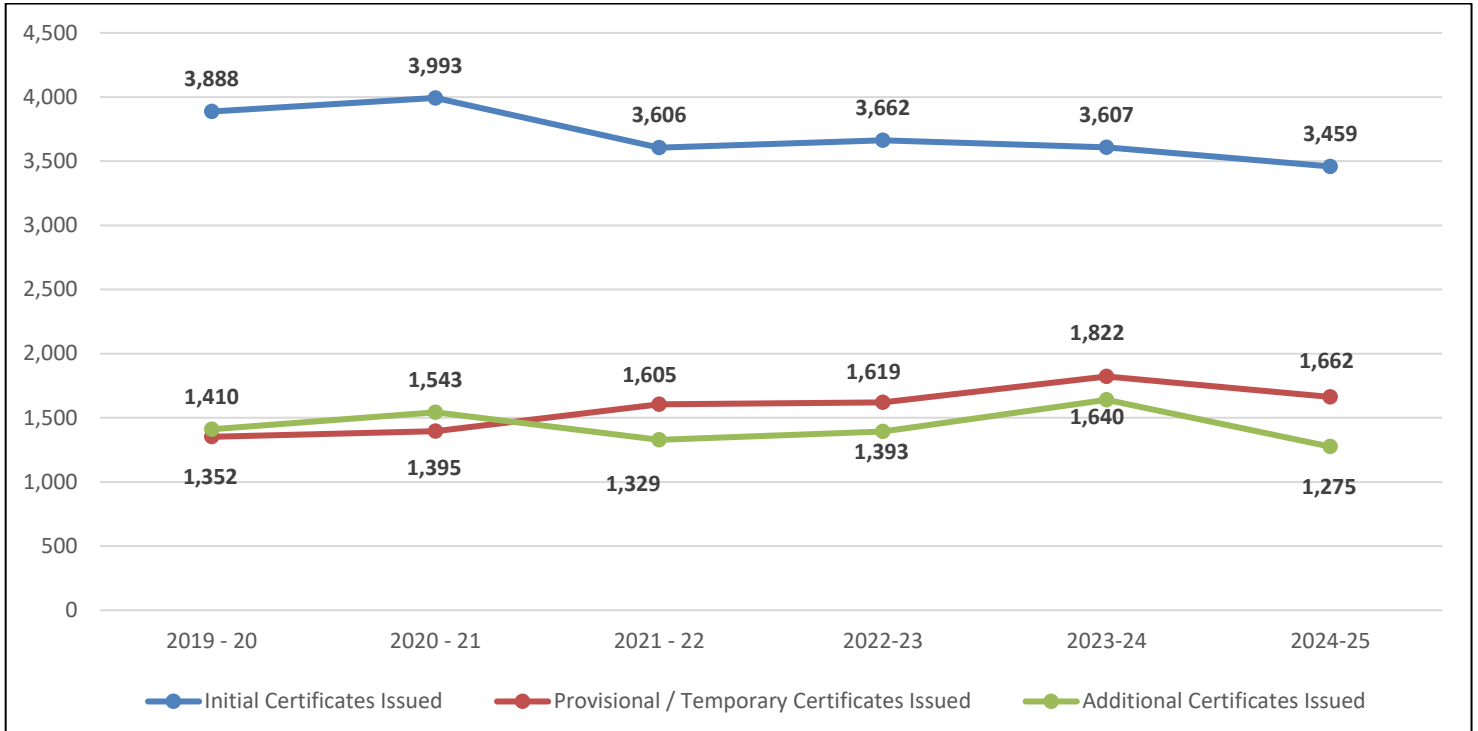


EPP Enrollment/Completers from 2019-20 to 2024-25²

School Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Enrollment	10,034	11,183	10,440	13,593	12,924	13,675
Completers	3,646	3,673	3,528	3,275	3,409	3,099

² Information from State Title II Report & Data from the State Annual Performance Report. As noted in Footnote 1 (p. 2), the manner in which enrollment data is collected changed in 2023, resulting in a significant rise in the number of reported enrolled students.

Teacher Certificates Issued from 2019-20 to 2024-25



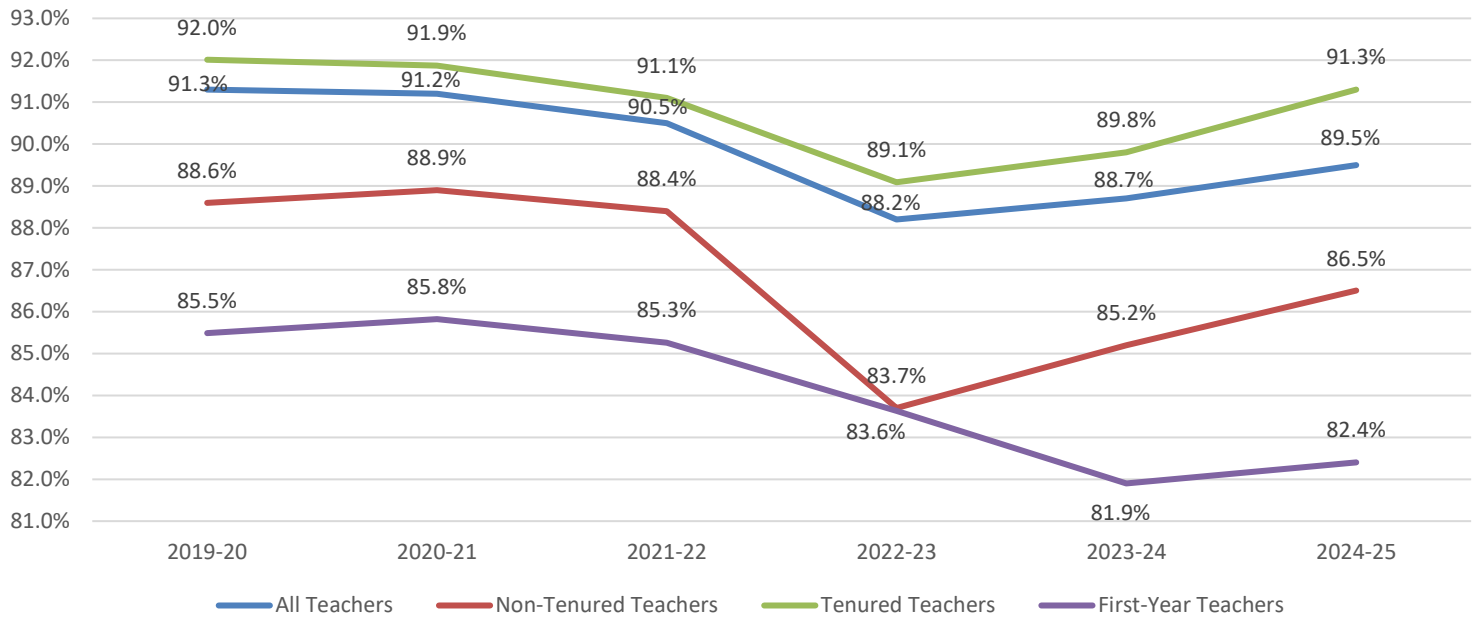
Teachers Certificates Issued from 2019-20 to 2024-25³

School Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Initial Certificates Issued	3,888	3,993	3,606	3,662	3,607	3,459
Provisional/Temporary Certificates Issued	1,352	1,395	1,605	1,619	1,822	1,662
Additional Certificates Issued	1,410	1,543	1,329	1,393	1,640	1,275

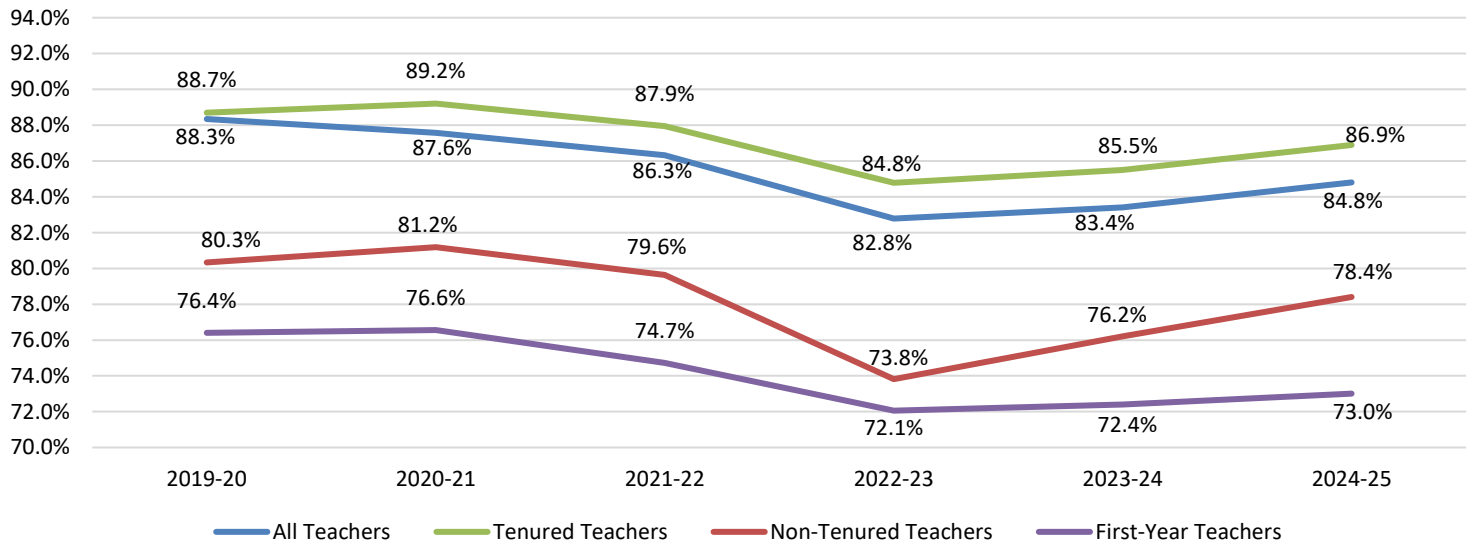
³ Information for this chart is from Missouri Educator Certification.

Retention Rates⁴

In-Profession Teacher Retention in Missouri Public Schools

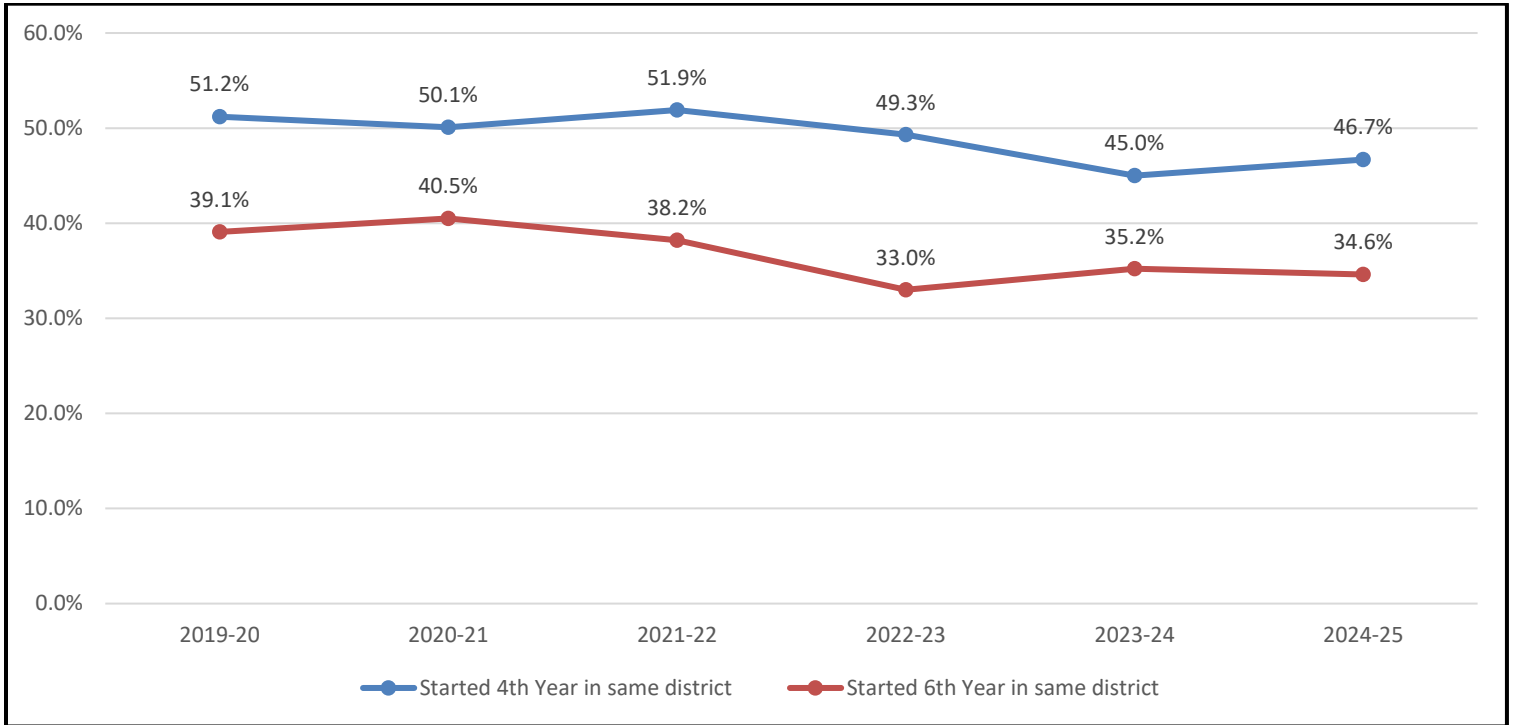


In-District Teacher Retention in Missouri Public Schools



⁴ **In-Profession** Teacher Retention refers to a teacher that remains a teacher in a Missouri public/charter school from one year to the next regardless of district. **In-District** Teacher Retention refers to a teacher that remains a teacher in the same district from one year to the next.

First-Year In-District Teacher Retention in Missouri's Public School Workforce from 2019-20 to 2024-25



Missouri's First-Year In-District Teacher Retention from 2019-20 to 2024-25

School Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
After 3 Years ⁵	51.2%	50.1%	51.9%	49.3%	45.0%	46.7%
After 5 Years ⁶	39.1%	40.5%	38.2%	33.0%	35.2%	34.6%

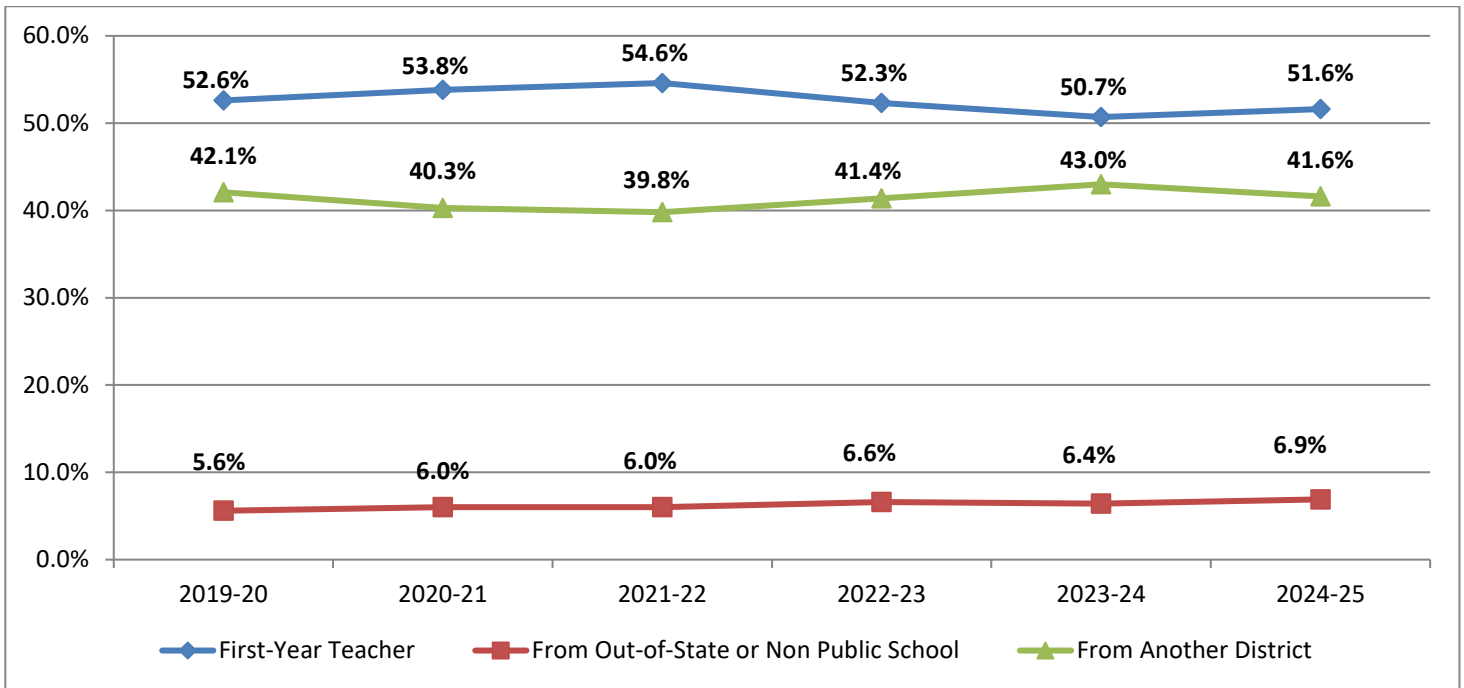
Missouri's In-District Teacher Retention Rates from 2019-20 to 2024-25

Total Teachers	71,170	70,832	71,713	72,082	72,353	72,781
District New Hires	8,091	7,031	8,547	10,136	9,595	8,771

⁵ Refers to Missouri first-year teachers with four or more years of teaching experience in the same district and comes from the October Cycle of the MOSIS/Core Data System.

⁶ Refers to Missouri first- year teachers with six or more years of teaching experience in the same district and comes from the October Cycle of the MOSIS/Core Data System.

District New Hires from 2019-20 to 2024-25

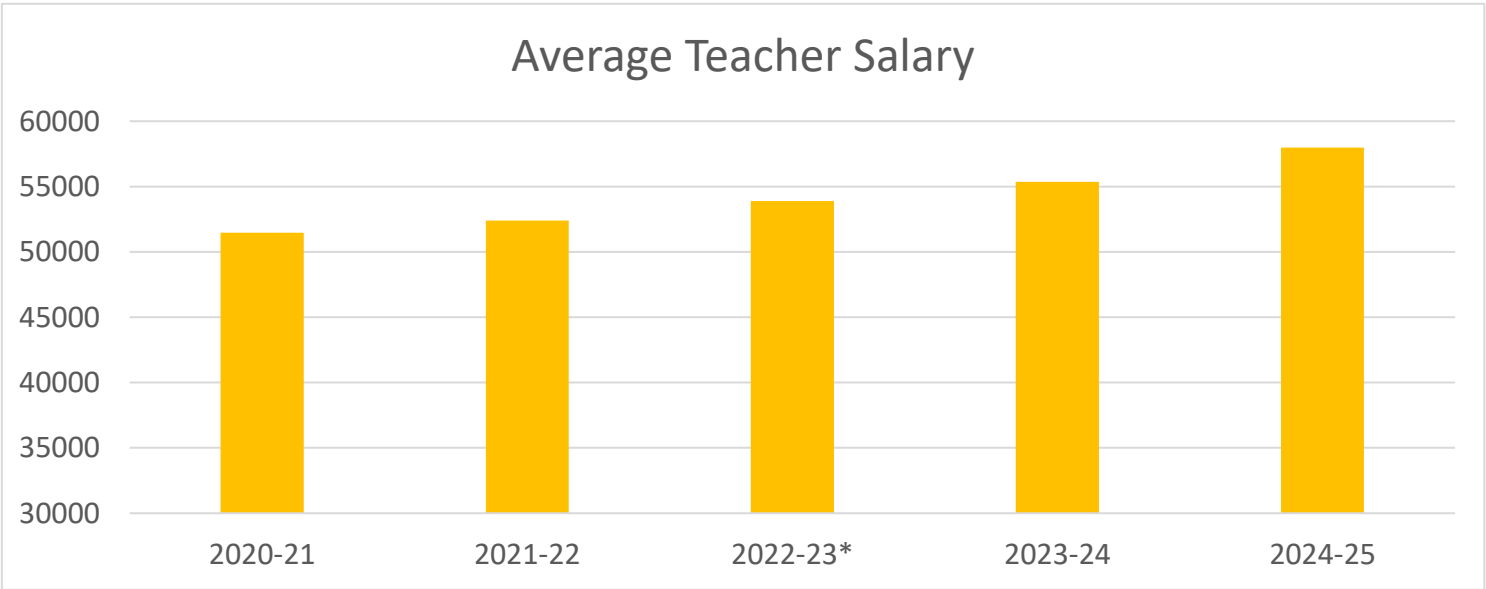
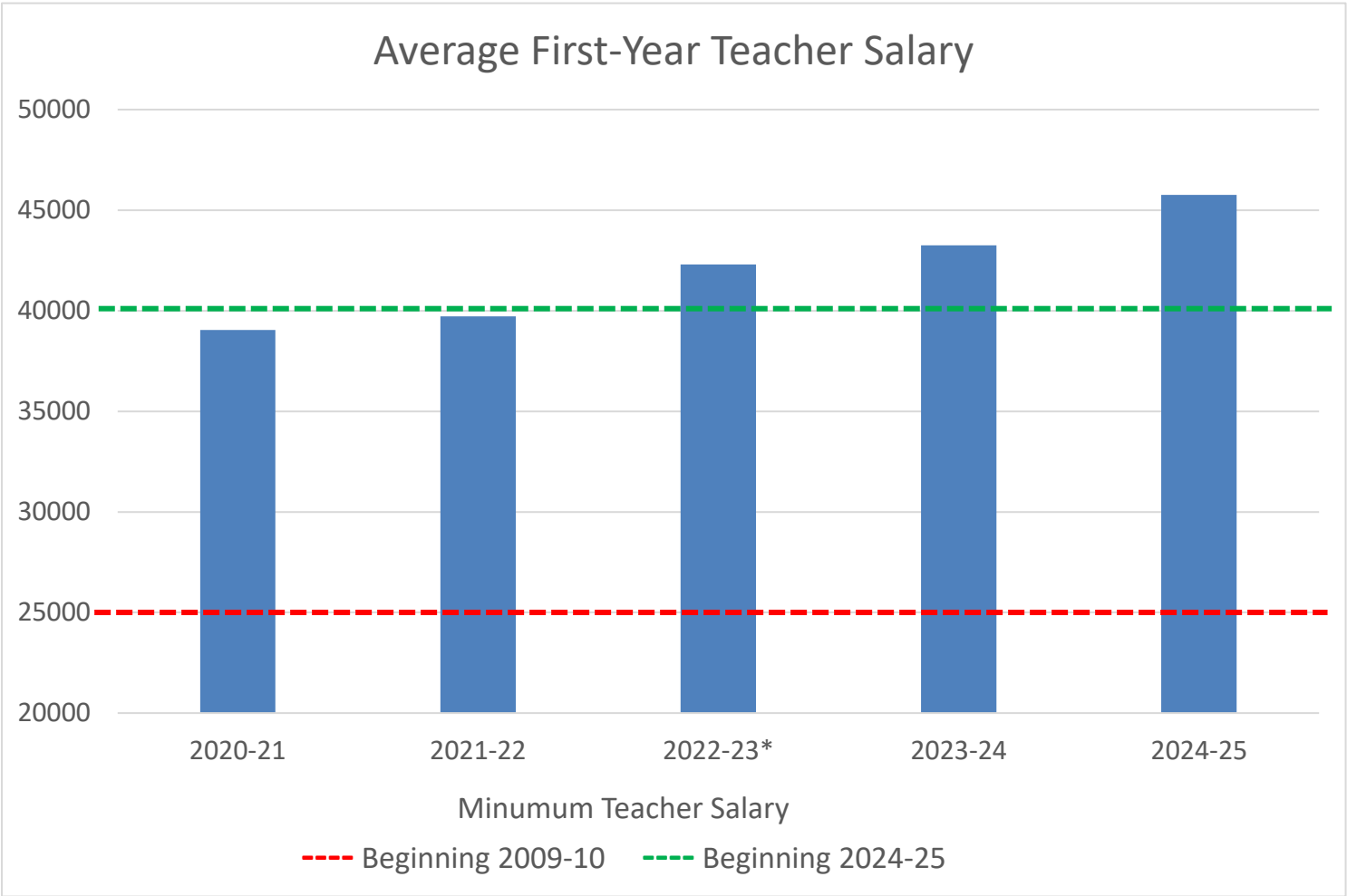


District New Hires from 2019-20 to 2024-25⁷

School Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total New Hires	8,091	7,031	8,547	10,136	9,595	8,771
First-Year Teachers	52.6%	53.8%	54.6%	52.3%	50.7%	51.6%
From Another District	42.1%	40.3%	39.8%	41.4%	43.0%	41.6%
From Out of State or Non-Public School	5.6%	6.0%	6.0%	6.6%	6.4%	6.9%

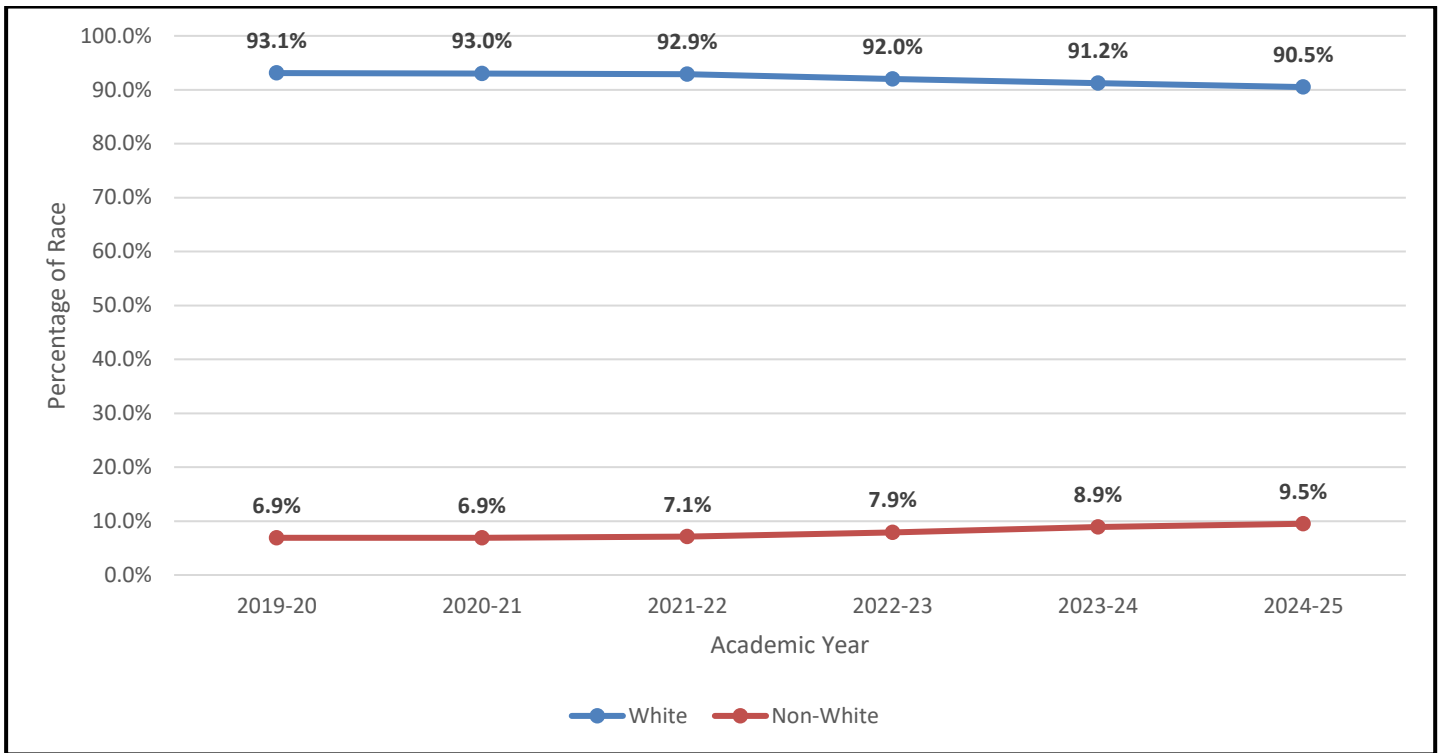
⁷ The information in this chart comes from the October Cycle of the MOSIS/Core Data System.

Average Teacher Salaries from 2020-21 to 2024-25⁸



⁸ *In 2022-23, Missouri implemented the Teacher Baseline Salary Grant (TBSG). This data shows the impact this grant had on the average first-year teacher salaries as well as the average teacher salary for all teachers.

Race/Ethnicity Trends from 2019-20 to 2024-25



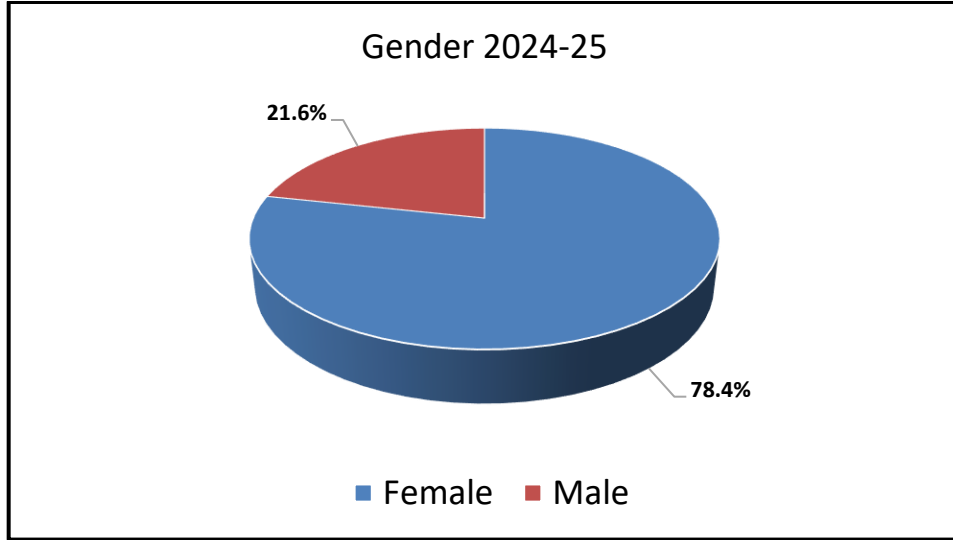
Gender and Race/Ethnicity Trends from 2019-20 to 2024-25⁹

School Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total Teachers	71,170	70,832	71,713	72,082	72,353	72,781
GENDER						
Female	78.5%	78.5%	78.5%	78.5%	78.1%	78.4%
Male	21.5%	21.5%	21.5%	21.5%	21.9%	21.6%
RACE/ETHNICITY						
White	93.1%	93.0%	92.9%	92.0%	91.2%	90.5%
Black	5.0%	4.9%	5.0%	5.5%	5.9%	6.2%
Other ¹⁰	1.9%	2.0%	2.1%	2.4%	3.0%	3.3%

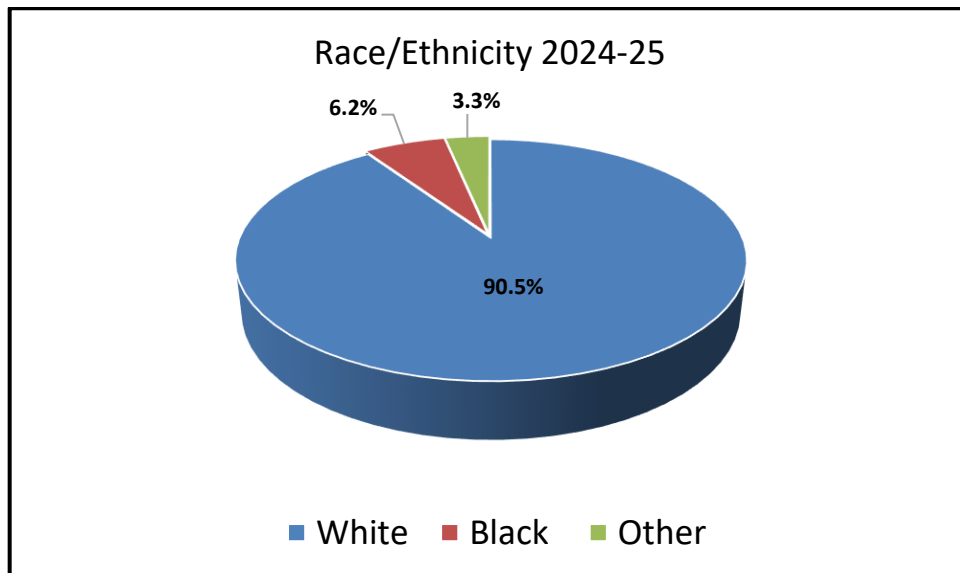
⁹ The information in this chart comes from the October Cycle of the MOSIS/Core Data System.

¹⁰ Refers to all non-white, non-black race/ethnicities.

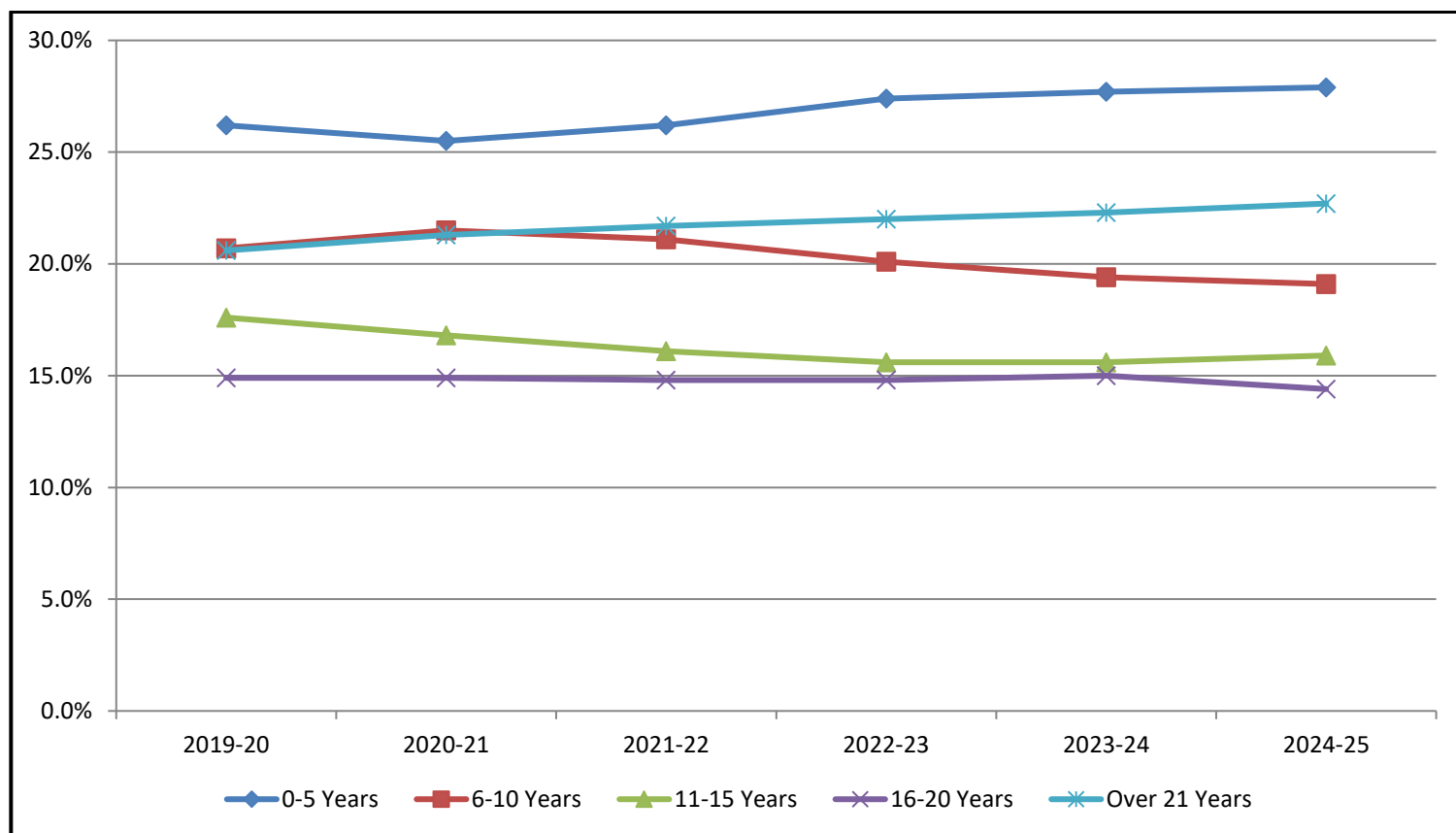
Teacher Demographics



School Year	2024-25
Total Teachers	72,781
GENDER	
Female	78.4%
Male	21.6%
RACE/ETHNICITY	
White	90.5%
Black	6.2%
Other	3.3%



Teacher's Years of Experience from 2019-20 to 2024-25



Years of Experience from 2019-20 to 2024-25¹¹

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
0-5	26.2%	25.5%	26.2%	27.4%	27.7%	27.9%
6-10	20.7%	21.5%	21.1%	20.1%	19.4%	19.1%
11-15	17.6%	16.8%	16.1%	15.6%	15.6%	15.9%
16-20	14.9%	14.9%	14.8%	14.8%	15.0%	14.4%
21+	20.6%	21.3%	21.7%	22.0%	22.3%	22.7%

Average Age of Teachers from 2019-20 to 2024-25¹²

AGE GROUP	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
20-29	15.0%	14.9%	15.1%	15.3%	15.6%	15.5%
30-39	30.1%	29.6%	28.9%	27.7%	26.9%	26.1%
40-49	29.2%	29.6%	29.9%	30.5%	30.6%	30.9%
50-59	19.5%	20.0%	20.2%	20.3%	20.7%	21.1%
60 +	6.1%	5.9%	5.8%	6.2%	6.3%	6.5%

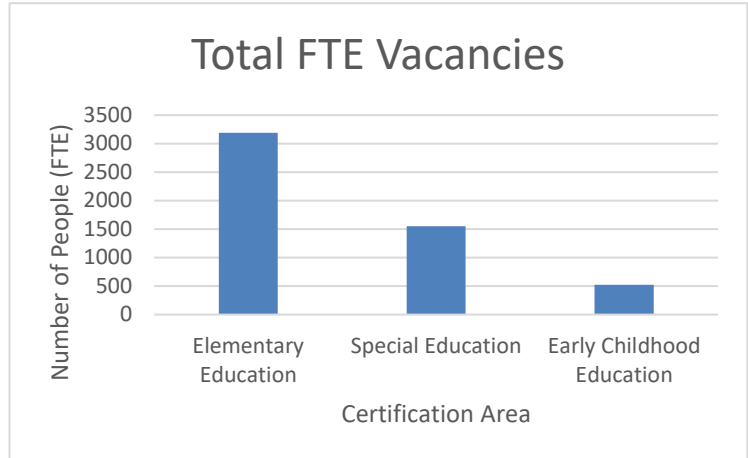
¹¹ The information in this chart comes from the October Cycle of the MOSIS/Core Data System.

¹² Information in this chart comes from Educator Certification.

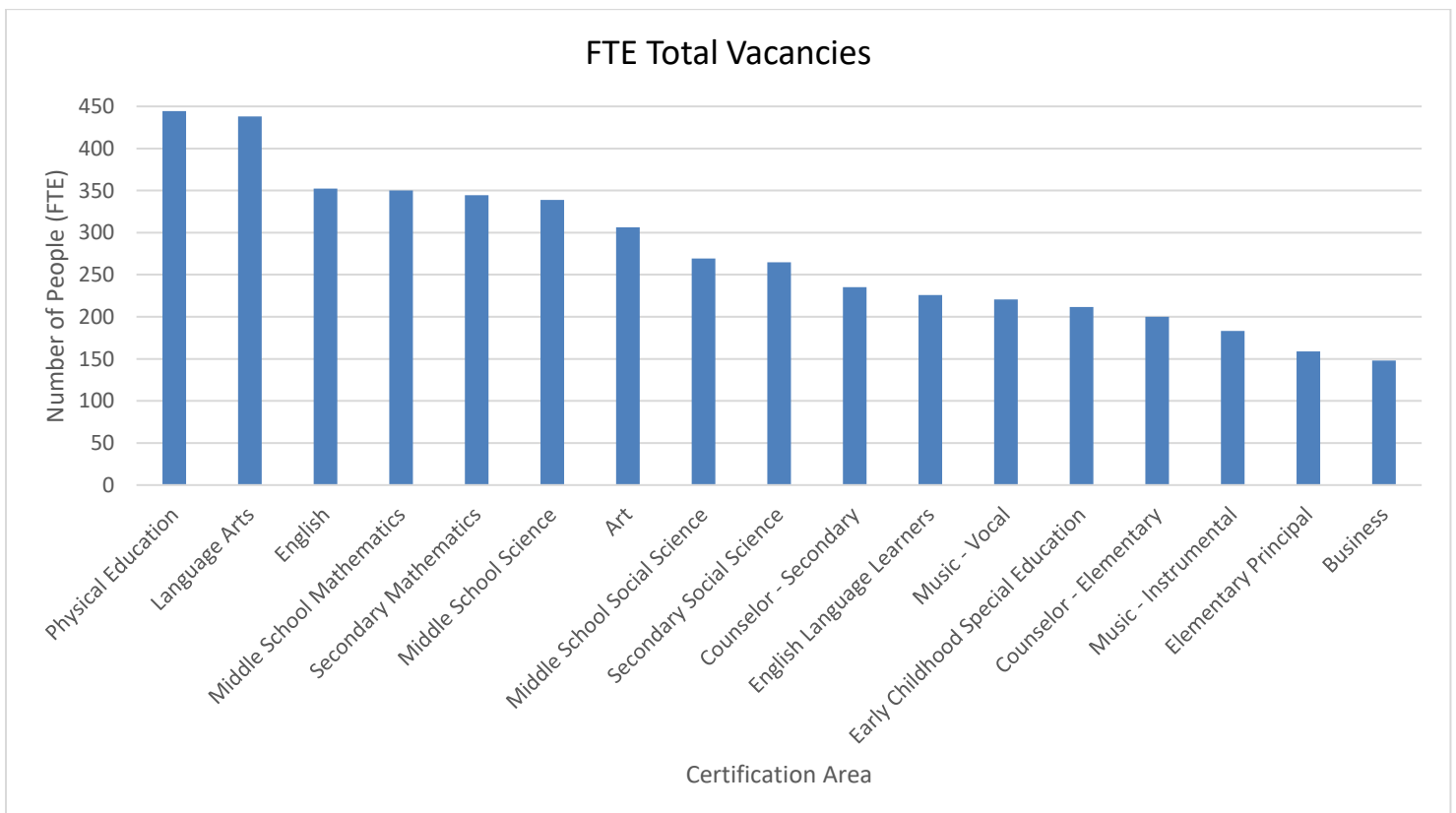
Educator Vacancy Data

This data is gathered through the Educator Vacancy page (Screen 21) of the October Cycle of the MOSIS/CoreData System for the 2024-25 school year. Districts who responded and completed this page employed over 80,000 educators in the state and served over 897,000 Missouri students.

This graph shows the number of vacancies statewide for the three certification areas with the highest numbers of full-time equivalent (FTE) vacancies in the state. There were 3,190.8 vacancies in Elementary Education, 1,548.3 vacancies in Special Education, and 522.0 vacancies in Early Childhood Education.



The following graph shows the number of FTE vacancies statewide for the next 17 certification areas with the highest numbers of vacancies in the state in order from greatest to least. The scale on this graph goes from 0-450, compared to a scale of 0-3,500 on the graph for Elementary Education, Special Education, and Physical Education, demonstrating the difference in the scale of overall vacancies by content area.



Teacher Shortage Data

The U.S. Department of Education approves content areas listed in the annual Teacher Shortage Report for the state of Missouri. Upon approval from the Department of Education, these content areas are declared critical shortage areas for the upcoming 2026-27 school year, making them eligible for federal loan forgiveness. Federal loans that qualify under this designation include the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL), Federal Perkins Loan, Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant Program, Stafford Loan, and Supplemental Loans for Students (SLS).

Method

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education must follow a particular methodology when making a determination of which content areas will be approved to be considered critical shortage areas. This represents the methodology of that calculation. In addition to critical shortage areas, universally accepted shortage areas are also eligible for federal loan forgiveness.

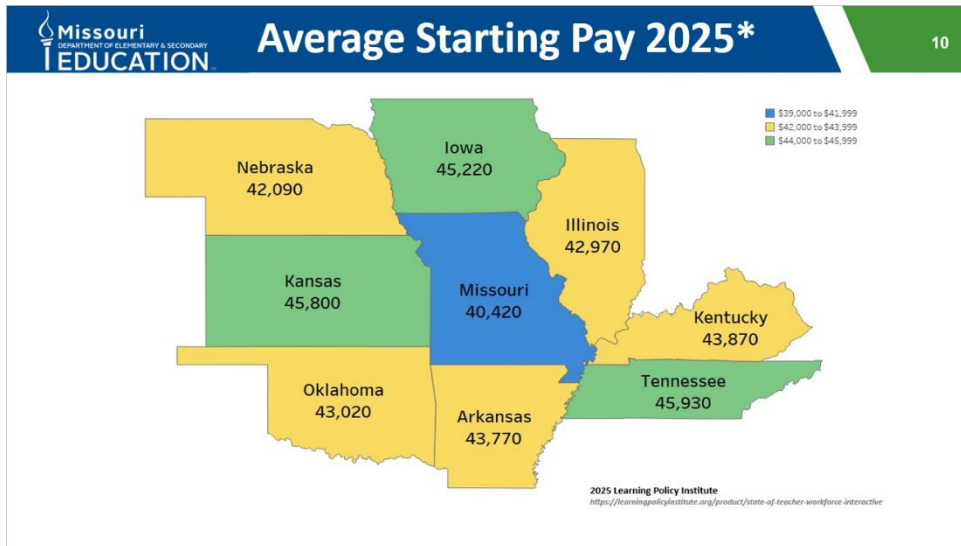
- Shortage areas were defined as those content areas within the state for which positions were filled with inappropriately certified teacher(s) or left vacant due to the absence of certified candidates.
- Inappropriately certified teachers and total FTE count for each content area were compiled.
- Inappropriately certified teachers by content area were determined by comparing the number of inappropriately certified FTE to the total FTE count for each content area.
- The percentage of FTE shortage by content area was determined by calculating the percentage of inappropriately certified teachers per content area as compared to the total number of teachers.
- A weighted value to represent the relative prominence of each content area was calculated as a percentage of the total FTE by content area as compared to the total number of teachers in the state.
- A weighted percentage of FTE shortage by content area was determined by multiplying the raw percentage of FTE shortage by the weight of each content area.
- Consistent with the U.S. Department of Education Teacher Shortage Areas External User Guide, the sum of shortage areas was determined not to exceed 5 percent of the total number of FTE teaching positions within the state.

Subject Area	FTE Inappropriately	Shortage Indicator	Critical Shortage	Universally Accepted
Critical Shortage Areas				
ELEMENTARY 1-6	880.38	1.56%	YES	N/A
EARLY CHILDHOOD B-3	393.25	0.69%	YES	N/A
PHYSICAL EDUCATION K-12	277.07	0.49%	YES	N/A
ART K-12	189.19	0.33%	YES	N/A
SOCIAL SCIENCE 5-9	162.24	0.29%	YES	N/A
SOCIAL SCIENCE 9-12	150.99	0.27%	YES	N/A
MUSIC-VOCAL K-12	118.3	0.21%	YES	N/A
HEALTH K-12	80.07	0.14%	YES	N/A
BUSINESS 9-12	79.29	0.14%	YES	N/A
FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES K-12	77.98	0.14%	YES	N/A
SPEECH & THEATER 9-12	44.83	0.08%	YES	N/A
MUSIC-INSTRUMENTAL K-12	27	0.05%	YES	N/A
AGRICULTURE 9-12	26.5	0.05%	YES	N/A
MARKETING K-12	20.22	0.04%	YES	N/A
BUSINESS 5-9	15.82	0.03%	YES	N/A
JOURNALISM 9-12	13.61	0.02%	YES	N/A
SPEECH & THEATER 5-9	12.96	0.02%	YES	N/A
DANCE K-12	12.04	0.02%	YES	N/A
AGRICULTURE 5-9	7.92	0.01%	YES	N/A
LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST K-12	1.34	0.00%	YES	N/A
Above content areas represent 4.58% in Critical Shortage Areas				
Universally Accepted Shortage Areas				
MILD MODERATE CROSS CATEGORICAL K-12	582.56	1.03%		YES
GENERAL SCIENCE 5-9	250.68	0.44%		YES
LANGUAGE ARTS 5-9	223.22	0.39%		YES
MATHEMATICS 9-12	221.81	0.39%		YES
MATHEMATICS 5-9	218.52	0.39%		YES
ENGLISH 9-12	179.65	0.32%		YES
GENERAL SCIENCE 9-12	117.99	0.21%		YES
EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION B-3	83.02	0.15%		YES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER K-12	78.84	0.14%		YES
SPANISH K-12	68.98	0.12%		YES
TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING 9-12	56.04	0.10%		YES
BIOLOGY 9-12	53.83	0.10%		YES
SEVERE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES K-12	44.41	0.08%		YES
TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING 5-9	29.56	0.05%		YES
CHEMISTRY 9-12	25.4	0.04%		YES
PHYSICS 9-12	17.36	0.03%		YES
GIFTED EDUCATION K-12	17.13	0.03%		YES
FRENCH K-12	9.6	0.02%		YES
CHINESE K-12	2.64	0.00%		YES
DEAF & HARD OF HEARING B-12	2	0.00%		YES
GERMAN K-12	1.81	0.00%		YES
BLIND AND LOW VISION B-12	1.7	0.00%		YES
LATIN K-12	1.64	0.00%		YES
JAPANESE K-12	0.04	0.00%		YES

Universally accepted shortage areas (i.e. mild moderate cross categorical K-12, Mathematic 9-12, Mathematics 5-9) and the other 24 content areas listed) are eligible for federally funded TEACH grants as well as the Critical Shortage areas. Please refer to the [Federal Student Aid](#) website for more information.

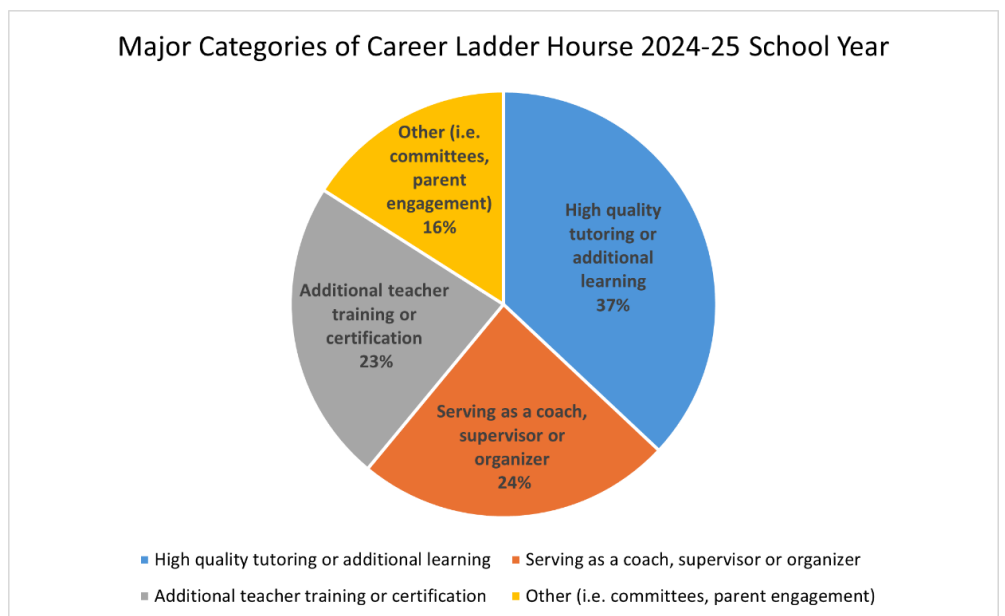
Significant Challenges with Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Teacher compensation has consistently been a significant teacher recruitment challenge. The Blue Ribbon Commission, established by the State Board of Education in fall 2022, gathered data to inform recruitment and retention recommendations. In a survey of over 15,000 Missouri teachers, the Blue Ribbon Commission asked what areas of



compensation would be the most important. Responses to these surveys showed that teachers thought it was an essential or high priority that an appropriate and competitive amount of base salary be included as a part of overall teacher compensation. A teacher baseline salary grant program was established and in the 2024 legislative session, the \$25,000 minimum pay in statute was increased to \$40,000 for teachers with a bachelor's degree and to \$46,000 for teachers with a master's degree. These pay increases also include a cost-of-living adjustment that begins in the 2028-29 school year.

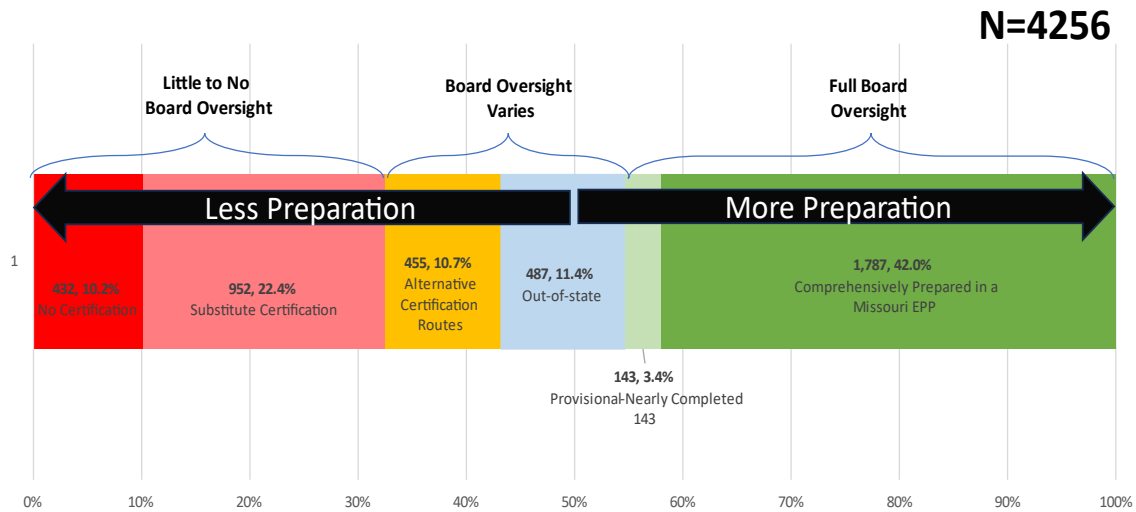
Additional compensation for teachers in Missouri has also been addressed through the Career Ladder Program. The program was last funded by the legislature in 2010, but funding was reinitiated in the 2021 legislative session. In the 2025-26 school year, the Career Ladder Program is providing additional funds to just over 18,000 teachers in nearly 270 of the 518 public school districts (52%). The total anticipated investment this school year of combined state funds and the local match is just over \$67 million. In the 2024-25 school year, hundreds of thousands of Career Ladder hours were spent providing high-quality tutoring or additional learning opportunities for students. Teachers also spent Career Ladder hours serving as a coach, supervisor or organizer and receiving additional trainings or certifications to improve their teaching practice.



2024-25 First-Year Teachers



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The significant challenge of recruiting teachers into the teaching profession has resulted in an increasing number of alternative pathways into the profession and the need for many different configurations of staffing classrooms. Many of these are designed to help alleviate staffing challenges being experienced by Missouri schools. As shown here, a majority of new teachers no longer complete a comprehensive and traditional teacher educator preparation program. It has also led to an increased use of long-term substitute teachers due to the impacts of teacher shortage in Missouri.

This has created a need for more intensive support for first year teachers to ensure they have the foundational knowledge and skills to be successful in their first years. As a result, the TEACHNow program was created as a part of the Missouri Teacher Development System (MTDS) to provide a three-day summer institute for new teachers to ensure they are sufficiently prepared for their first day of school. In addition, the Beginning Teacher Assistance Program (BTAP), established in statute (168.400.4 RSMo), provides two years of intensive support to early career teachers to ensure they are successful as new teachers. It is an ideal option for those first-year teachers not completing a comprehensive educator preparation program (EPP). As shown here, those teachers not traditionally prepared represent a significant portion of all new teachers.

Financial Aid for Students Preparing To Be Teachers

The U.S. Department of Education has approved the content areas listed in the [Teacher Shortage Report](#) as areas of critical shortage for the State of Missouri in the 2024-25 school year. Based on this designation, teachers that are teaching within shortage areas identified by this report are eligible for loan forgiveness. Federal loans that qualify under this designation include the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL), Federal Perkins Loan, TEACH Grant Program, Stafford Loan, and Supplemental Loans for Students (SLS). For more information, please visit:

[U.S. Department of Education – Teacher Shortage](#)

For questions regarding various grants and scholarships that are available to candidates who are working to become a teacher, you can visit this page on the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development.

[Grants and Scholarships](#)

The Department provides additional data on [Teacher Loan Forgiveness](#) that provides support to teacher candidates working on entering the teaching profession. This is particularly important as student loan debt is an ongoing challenge for those trying to be teachers. Other information is also available on the [Federal Student Aid](#) website.

Missouri legislators have provided state appropriations to support three vital areas in our efforts to improve teacher recruitment in our state and address the serious challenges created by the teacher shortage. The following provides more information on the use of these additional funds.

- **Grow Your Own Grants:** State funds were made available to provide grants to 125 school districts and charter schools during the 2024-25 school year to develop, implement and refine their grow your own programs, resulting in increased enrollment in educator preparation programs. More information is available on the statewide [GYO program](#) webpage. These grants were not funded in FY26.
- **Teacher Recruitment Grants:** State funds were made available to provide grants to 15 educator preparation programs and five community colleges during the 2024-25 school year to help support teacher candidates in their preparation to be an educator. More information is available about this program on the [Educator Preparation](#) webpage. These grants were not funded in FY26.
- **Missouri Teacher Recruitment Scholarships:** State funds were made available in the form of scholarships for teacher candidates to explore teaching in high-need districts. The funding provided potential funding for up to \$800,000 in scholarships to teacher candidates willing to student teach in a high-needs district during the 2025-26 Academic Year. After previously awarded aid (e.g. Pell Grants, other scholarships) had been applied, the scholarships could be used to cover the tuition and fees for these teacher candidates. You can review the [Guidance for the Missouri Teacher Recruitment Scholarships](#) for more information.